



HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

City of Battle Creek, Planning and Community Development Department
Commerce Pointe Bldg., 77 East Michigan Avenue, Ste. 204
Battle Creek, Michigan 49017
Phone: (269) 966-3320 Fax: (269) 966-3529

APPLICATION FOR DETERMINATION OF APPROPRIATENESS

Date: _____ Applicant/Contact Name: _____

Phone #: _____ Property Owner: _____

Property Address: _____

Address for Correspondence (If different from property address): _____

Applicants Role: *Owner* _____ *Architect* _____ *Contractor* _____ *Other:* _____

HUD Funded: *Yes* _____ *No* _____ In a Historic District: *Yes* _____ *No* _____

On or before date of completion of proposed work, the building will have a code compliant smoke detector or fire alarm system? *Yes* _____ *No* _____

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:

Instructions:

- **The Commission will not consider an application with inadequate or unclear information.** Review your application with City staff in advance to be sure it is complete.
- **The property owner or person authorized to act on the owner's behalf must attend the Historic District Commission (HDC) meeting when this application is considered.** If an authorized representative will be attending a letter of authorization must be included with this application.
- **Provide drawings that explain what is proposed. Elevations are required for all projects.** Include plans, site plan, details, specifications, and product information as needed.
- **ONE set of drawings on 8 ½ x 11 paper is strongly recommended.** This set will be copied and distributed in the HDC packets. For larger drawings, colored prints, or anything that cannot be copied by staff, submit 10 copies of each item.
- **Indicate all dimensions.** Drawings should be to scale.
- **Submit one copy of the following photos:** All four elevations of the building (straight on shots of all four sides of the building), a historical photo of the property (check the Willard Library 1940 picture file), and a street photo showing adjacent structures to the property.
- **Provide specific information on all materials:** Manufacturer's names, illustrations, specifications, and samples. Material information should be submitted with this application. All samples (paint color chips, shingles, etc.) should be brought to the meeting.
- **Indicate not only the immediate area of the work, but also how it relates to the building as a whole.** Enlarged photocopies of photographs with the proposed changes drawn in may be helpful.
- **For new construction, indicate both in plan and elevation how the project will relate to the surrounding streetscape.**
- **Proposed demolition should include estimates for the complete repair of the property.**
- **For smaller projects** staff can provide information on previous HDC decisions as a guide to what may be acceptable. For complex projects such as additions, applicants are encouraged to consider seeking the advice and expertise of an architect familiar with historic preservation.

Historic District Commission

Application for Determination of Appropriateness

FAQ's

Why do I have to apply to the Historic District Commission (HDC) to work on my house or commercial building?

By city ordinance, all proposed modifications affecting the exterior appearance of buildings located in a *locally* designated portion of a Historic District must first be reviewed and approved by the HDC.

This is to assure that modifications and improvements do not compromise the historical integrity of the building or of the district it is located in.

What do I need to do for the Historic District Commission to review my modifications?

The “Application for Determination of Appropriateness” includes a detailed list of information you should prepare for the HDC.

Can I demolish a building in an historic district?

There are often situations in which the quality and/or condition of a structure may make demolition an appropriate solution to a problem. In general, however, the HDC encourages creative rehabilitation and adaptive re-use solutions before demolition is proposed – demolition is an irreversible action and all viable alternatives should be considered first.

Guidelines for determining if a building in a local historic district can be demolished include:

- The structure is of minimal historic and/or architectural significance
- The demolition will have no adverse impact on the adjacent area or upon the historic district as a whole
- The property is a hazard to the safety of the public or occupants
- The property is a deterrent to a major improvement program which will be of substantial benefit to the community
- Retention of the property will cause undue financial hardship to the owner. If claiming undue financial hardship, you will need to provide the following:
 - Cost of rehabbing the property
 - Cost of demolition
 - Market prices of structures in the neighborhood
 - Clear photographs detailing the current condition of the house (interior and exterior)

What if I want to build something new within a Historic District?

The HDC encourages new building and development that will be harmonious with the existing historic buildings and neighborhoods, but not necessarily of the same architectural style.

Elements looked at to determine compatibility include form, mass, proportion, configuration, building material, texture, location on the site, and landscaping.

As with any new building, all zoning and building requirements (such as setbacks, height, parking, building materials, etc.) must be met.

When does the HDC meet? Do I have to go to the meeting?

The HDC meets the 2nd Monday of each month at 4:00 p.m. in the Chamber of Commerce Board Room located at Commerce Pointe, 77 E. Michigan Avenue (lower level). In order to have your application considered you must have it submitted to our office by the petition deadline date which is approximately 20 days prior to the meeting date for that month (please contact the Planning Department for specific submittal deadline dates). You must attend the meeting in order to address any questions the Historic District Commission may have.

Who can I call with questions?

You may contact the Planning Department at 269-966-3320, 77 E. Michigan Avenue, Suite 204, Commerce Pointe, Battle Creek, Michigan.



The Historic District Commission must approve all exterior changes to buildings in Battle Creek's Historic Districts, in advance.

Review Process

- Changes are proposed for the exterior of a building
- Application is filed with Planning Department in Suite 204, Commerce Pointe, requesting Historic District Commission review
- Staff prepares application for presentation to the Historic District Commission
- Notifications are sent to applicants and others interested in the application
- Commission holds public hearing on the application
- Commission approves the application, sends back to applicant for revisions, or denies the application

Important Note:

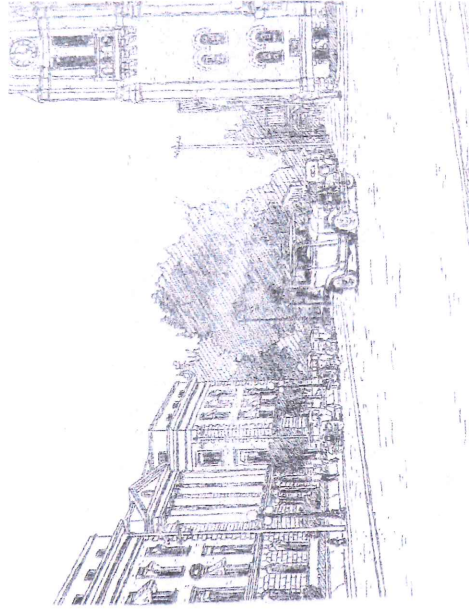
If you are planning any changes to the outside of your house please contact the City Planning Department at 966-3320. Staff there can assist you in applying for the appropriate permits. They will also help you through the review process if necessary.

Historic District Commission
Commerce Pointe, Suite 204
77 E. Michigan Avenue
Battle Creek, MI 47017



City of Battle Creek

Important People Important Neighborhoods



Historic District Commission

You live in a protected area of Battle Creek. It's called an **Historic District**.

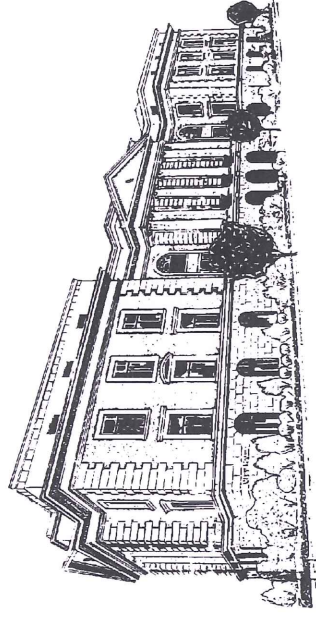
The neighborhood in which you live is viewed as an historic district because of its important events, residents, or significant contributions to our city's history. If you plan any exterior changes to your property, there are some guidelines you need to follow. This brochure describes in brief how the property owner goes about securing approval to update property in an historic district.

Some people might refer to an historic district as a 'bunch of old houses in the same neighborhood.' Simply put, an historic district is an area in our community that has buildings and sites that are considered to be important to our city's heritage. They have character and history. Historic districts try to preserve that!

Communities throughout the United States have found that historic districts give cities new life. That might seem odd that something old gives something new, but it is true. Historic districts traditionally keep property values stable because they encourage residents to maintain pride in their neighborhood.

Across the nation, communities have developed preservation groups to help find ways to protect important historic structures. Some of these groups have paid staff and some operate with volunteers who have an interest in and a concern for saving historic sites.

Here in Battle Creek there is a group of citizens, appointed by the mayor who serve on the Historic District Commission. They are volunteers who study the community to determine where the city's roots are located. They are charged with holding public meetings with the express purpose of reviewing applications from individuals who wish to change or alter the exterior of their historic district property.



The Historic District Commission

The Battle Creek Historic District Commission is a seven member board made up of volunteers from the community. Appointments to this board are made by the Mayor. The Commission is required by state legislation to have an architect and two historians with master degrees as members. The remaining members must show an interest and knowledge of local history and the preservation of city structures.

The Commission meets once a month to review permit applications for exterior changes to structures in the city's historic districts. Although this is one of their primary responsibilities, they also plan activities for Preservation Week each year and maintain an ongoing survey of Battle Creek's historic properties.

Battle Creek's Historic Districts

Where are Battle Creek's Historic Districts? Battle Creek has four local historic districts. They are:

Maple Street Historic District

Located along Capital Avenue N.E.

Central Business Historic District

Located along Michigan Avenue in the downtown area.

Old Advent Town Historic District

Located north of the river between

Washington Avenue and Limit Streets.

Merritt Woods Historic District

Located north of Emmett Street.

Maps showing the actual boundaries of these districts can be seen in the Planning Department in Commerce Pointe.

Battle Creek is proud of the many historic buildings located in both commercial and residential neighborhoods. It is important for economic reasons to maintain these buildings. Too often, when individuals make exterior changes to a building it destroys part or all of the historical importance of the building. The Historic District Commission can provide guidance to property owners, which could help preserve the importance of your building. This is of benefit to you, the property owner, and to the City.